

From: Mike Graham
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 2:41am
Subject: allowing a Microsoft monopoly

To allow Microsoft to do exactly as they please will have profound, negative effects on the Internet, and on computing in general.

Microsoft can, and will, stifle competition in more and more spheres of Information Technology, just as they have done with the web browser market.

Their current aim is not just application or OS competition, it is control over the Internet. With their ".net" project, they clearly wish to create an environment where one must use their kind of browser, and their OS, to access as many sites as they are able to influence. MSN and their affiliates are the first case--but by manipulating the web browser, OS and .net environments, Microsoft will try to make the World Wide Web as inhospitable a place as possible for anyone not 100% compliant.

There are precedents: in the period 1997-1998, one had to use IE to access Microsoft's gaming site. Until mid-2001, one had to use IE to download 128-bit encryption strength NT service packs--which IT and Tech Support types must do quite often. Also, given that IE is installed by default on Windows, that makes it that much easier to use, for example this e-mail is written in a Java window in IE.

The worst danger, in my view, of Microsoft monopolizing much of the Internet, is it will naturally stifle competition--Microsoft does not suffer competition to exist unless they are safely niche (such as Apple Computer). Other firms doing Internet ventures may not be able to develop or adapt as quickly, as they will have to work around whatever Microsoft wants to do--just as exists now in the desktop application industry. Consider the day when Cisco may have to develop around Microsoft's strategy.

The Internet was built by people passionate about quality product for its own sake, people like Jon Postel. I see the Internet becoming stagnant in the near decade, that which was the economic engine of the 90's and is now a cornerstone of prosperity worldwide.

Please reach a restrictive conclusion in the current Microsoft anti-trust case, ideally breaking up the monopoly. Otherwise, the corporation may become more powerful, more insidious, more corruptive than anyone now cares to imagine.

Thank you,

Mike Graham
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